



# PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN TEXAS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Primary Prevention Approach

---

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Texas Primary Prevention Steering Committee:

**Annette Burrhus Clay, MA**

Executive Director  
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

**Morgan J Curtis, LMSW**

Director of Prevention Programs  
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

**Peggy Helton**

Primary Prevention Specialist  
Office of the Attorney General

**Linda Hunter**

Interpersonal Violence Prevention  
Collaborative Coordinator  
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

**Maria Peña, MPA**

Women's and Perinatal Health  
Coordinator  
Department of State Health Services

**Kimberly Petrilli Warren, MSPH, MSW**

State Child Health Coordinator  
Department of State Health Services

## Texas Primary Prevention Planning Committee (PPPC) Members:\*

**Joel Bennett, PhD**

Organizational Wellness & Learning  
Systems, Inc.

**Noel Busch-Armendariz, PhD, LMSW,  
MPA**

The University of Texas at Austin,  
School of Social Work

**Victoria Camp, M.Ed.**

Texas Association Against Sexual  
Assault

**Emiliano Diaz de Leon**

Men's Resource Center of South Texas  
Texas Association Against Sexual  
Assault

**Hillary Foulkes, MPH**

Department of State Health Services

**Rick Gipprich**

Rape Crisis Center for Children and  
Adults

**Karen Kalergis, MA**

The University of Texas at Austin,  
Institute of Domestic Violence and  
Sexual Assault

**Cheri Lee**

Independent Consultant

**Tim Love**

Texas Association Against Sexual  
Assault

**Steve Martinez**

Archdiocese of San Antonio

**Chan McDermott**

Department of State Health Services

**Don Mills**

Texas Christian University

**Rick Musquiz**

Montrose Counseling Center

**Sharon Pierce**

Family Career and Community Leaders  
of America

**Aaron Sayegh, PhD**

Department of State Health Services

**Lori Schneider**

Office of the Attorney General

**Cathy Smith**

Office of the Attorney  
General/Community Stakeholder

**Julia Spann**

SafePlace

**Glenn D. Stockard**

Eastland County Crisis Center

**Margaret Vaaler, PhD**

Texas Department of State Health  
Services

**Alta Williams**

Panhandle Crisis Center  
Community Stakeholder

**Kelly Young**

Houston Area Women's  
Center/Community Stakeholder

**\* The PPPC membership list is inclusive of all individuals who participated on the committee at any time during the planning process.**

## **Statement of Philosophy Regarding Working with Women to Prevent Sexual Violence**

The Texas Primary Prevention Planning Committee (PPPC) is committed to a primary prevention approach to end sexual violence and believes that the best way to prevent victimization is to prevent first time perpetration. Furthermore, the committee believes the vast majority of risk factors and strategies to prevent victimization put the onus of responsibility on the potential victim. Such an approach creates the potential for victim blaming and does not support the type of social change necessary to end sexual violence. For these reasons, the PPPC made a deliberate decision to focus on the prevention of first-time perpetration in this plan.

That being said, the committee believes that engaging women and girls is important for the primary prevention of sexual violence. However, the approach in working with women and girls should not be an attempt to help them prevent their own victimization. Just as we must approach men as more than just potential perpetrators, we must also approach women as more than just potential victims. Women and girls are reared in the same society as men and boys and, like men and boys, are subject to rigid gender socialization. As products of this society, both women and men have a role in perpetuating societal norms. This means that both women and men have a place in interrupting unhealthy norms and creating new, healthy and equitable norms.

Therefore, work with women and girls to prevent sexual violence should be approached from this understanding. For example, women and girls can be trained in bystander skills to interrupt instances of degradation and bigotry. Girls can engage in programs designed to increase social competencies, positive values, and positive identity and women can engage in programs designed to build skills around modeling these competencies. Women can engage in skill building programs that can assist them in mobilizing community organizations to end gender inequality and/or to increase positive, healthy, realistic images and representations of women.

It will take people of all genders to create a world without sexual violence. It is vital to change the paradigm of victim-centered prevention and speak of primary prevention of sexual violence in terms of stopping perpetration before it occurs. *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas, A Primary Prevention Approach* was developed from that perspective.

## Executive Summary

In January 2007, a diverse group of stakeholders came together to form the Texas Primary Prevention Planning Committee (PPPC). The charge of the PPPC was to develop a plan to end sexual violence in Texas using a primary prevention approach. *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas, A Primary Prevention Approach, 2010 – 2018* is the product of those efforts.

Sexual violence has a devastating impact on individuals, families, communities, and our society as a whole<sup>1</sup>.

In Texas, approximately 1.9 million adult Texans or 13% of adult Texans have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime. The proportion of sexual assault is significantly higher in females (20%) than males (5%)<sup>2</sup>.

Although these numbers are staggering, the true magnitude of sexual violence in Texas is difficult to assess since sexual assault often goes unreported. Based on findings from *A Health Survey of Texans: A Focus on Sexual Assault*, only 18% of Texans who experienced sexual assault reported their most recent assault to the police<sup>2</sup>.

Texas Sexual Assault Programs have a long history of providing services to survivors and conducting risk reduction and sexual assault awareness education. Now Texas must go beyond risk reduction and awareness and work to change the norms, climate, and culture of our communities and our state that allow sexual violence to occur in the first place.

Over the past several years, as the PPPC was developing this plan, Texas Sexual Assault Programs have conducted community based needs and resources assessments and have engaged community stakeholders in primary prevention planning efforts. This important work, completed at the local level, provided vital data to the PPPC and readied Texas communities for the implementation of new strategies/activities designed to stop sexual violence before it occurs. The committee is grateful to the Texas Sexual Assault Programs for their commitment and efforts at the local level which helped to make the development of this plan possible.

Due to the vast diversity and geography of Texas, most public health efforts, like the primary prevention of sexual violence, are coordinated at the local level. For this reason, Texas communities require flexibility with state-led activities. Local flexibility allows and encourages communities to address sexual violence prevention, as well as many other issues, with the appropriate cultural context that will meet the unique needs of their community. State-mandated activities cannot adequately account for these cultural and regional differences. Additionally, the PPPC recognizes that Texas has a strong capacity building team, consisting of staff from the state sexual assault coalition and the Office of the Attorney General, which stands ready to assist organizations responsible for implementing this plan. Therefore, this committee stopped short of recommending specific strategies/activities to address the goals identified in this plan.

The aim of the committee was to provide guidance in primary prevention efforts, honor the work already completed at the local level by Texas Sexual Assault Programs, allow the flexibility required to develop community based strategies/activities as appropriate, and provide shared goals at the state level which will allow the work done in each community to be ultimately working toward the same ends, thus increasing the likelihood for change to take place.

The PPPC utilized the Public Health Model in the development of this plan. The Public Health Model is a four-step, systematic process that provides a framework for addressing public health concerns at a population level. The presence and magnitude of sexual violence has serious implications on the health and wellness of the entire Texas population; therefore, the public health sector has a key role to play in the primary prevention of sexual violence. By utilizing the public health perspective in conjunction with social change models, the PPPC focused this plan on targeting risk factors to prevent the first time perpetration and victimization of sexual violence.

Along with identifying Texas specific risk and protective factors that contribute to sexual violence, this plan provides guidance on how to best utilize Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) funds awarded to Texas. RPE funds are awarded to state health departments from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Award amounts are based on population with Texas currently receiving approximately 2.8 million dollars.

*Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas, A Primary Prevention Approach* is the first such plan designed specifically for Texas and the first to address the prevention of sexual violence through a primary prevention approach. The PPPC wishes to extend a special thank you to the Interpersonal Violence Prevention Collaborative (IVPC), which led the first statewide initiative focused on preventing interpersonal violence in Texas. This work provided a framework from which the PPPC began the process of developing a prevention plan specific to sexual violence from a primary prevention approach. This new direction provides Texas the opportunity to stop sexual violence before it occurs so that all Texans can live, work, and play in a state free from sexual violence.

The following information represents significant findings of the committee and includes Texas demographics, the magnitude of sexual violence in Texas, and information regarding the perpetration of sexual violence.

#### Demographics:

- Texas' land area is approximately 262,000 square miles accounting for 7.4% of the total land mass of the United States<sup>5</sup>.
- Texas is home to six of the 21 largest cities in the U.S. (Houston – 4<sup>th</sup>, San Antonio – 7<sup>th</sup>, Dallas – 9<sup>th</sup>, Austin – 16<sup>th</sup>, Forth Worth – 19<sup>th</sup>, and El Paso – 21<sup>st</sup>)
- 197 of Texas' 254 counties are rural<sup>6</sup>.

- In 2008, an estimated 24,326,974 persons lived in Texas<sup>9</sup>. Between 2000 and 2007, the Texas population increased 14.6% compared to an overall growth in the U.S. of 7.2%. Texas was the eighth fastest growing state between 1990 and 2007 and the sixth fastest growing state between 2000 and 2007.
- According to the Texas State Data Center, by the year 2010, Texas' population will exceed 25 million people and will reach a population in excess of 40 million people by 2040<sup>7</sup>.
- Between 1950 and 2000, the U.S.-Mexico border population increased by about 10 million people. Between 1990 and 2007, the population in the border region increased by 44.9%.<sup>10</sup>
- It is expected that Texas will become a majority Hispanic state between 2034 and 2035 under the long-term scenario, and between 2026 and 2027 under the short-term scenario.<sup>9</sup>
- The population 65 years of age or older, about 2.1 million in 2000, could be as high as 8.2 million by 2040 and could increase by more than 295%. No other age group shows as large an increase.<sup>7</sup>
- Minimal information is available on individuals and families identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (GLBTQ) living in Texas. However, based on the Census Snapshot from the Williams Institute, there are 49,423 same sex couples currently living in Texas with 20% raising children. Texas's same sex couples are racially and ethnically diverse.
- The population size of Migrant and Seasonal Workers (MSFW) in Texas are difficult to estimate as Texas is a major sending state for migrants throughout the country. In 2000, it was estimated that Texas had 362,724 Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers<sup>12</sup>.
- According to the 2007 American Community Survey (collected by the U.S. Census Bureau), an estimated 16% of individuals and 13% of families in Texas live below the federal poverty line. Hispanic individuals carried the greatest burden in terms of poverty; 24.8% Hispanic individuals lived in poverty. However, African American individuals were very similar to Hispanic individuals in terms of poverty at the individual and family level.
- A greater percent of females lived in poverty compared to males (18% and 14% respectively). Over 32% of female-headed households (no husband present) lived in poverty.<sup>14</sup>
- Texas has a higher general poverty rate than the rest of the nation as well as a higher poverty rate for children (under age 18) and young children (under age 5).
- There is a significant wage gap by gender at all levels of educational attainment. Overall, women make about 70% of men's earnings.<sup>14</sup>

#### Sexual Violence Victimization:

- Based on the 2007 Uniform Crime Report (UCR), Texas currently has a rate of 35.3 rapes per 100,000 persons.

- Approximately 1.9 million adult Texans or 13% of adult Texans have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime.
- The proportion of sexual assault is significantly higher in females (20%) than males (5%).
- The majority of female victims are assaulted by a man that they know.
- Among college women, approximately 20% to 25% report being victims of sexual assault.
- 14% of Texas high school females and 4% of Texas high school males reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to<sup>22</sup>.
- In State Fiscal Year 2008 (SFY08), 21,434 survivors of sexual violence sought services from the 77 Texas Sexual Assault Programs.
- There is no state level data on sexual violence experience among persons identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) in Texas. However, findings from the 2007 National School Climate Survey found that 72% of LGBTQ youth report being sexually harassed during the past school year<sup>24</sup>.
- Minimal data on sexual assault victimization is available by race/ethnicity. Due to the limitations of data sources and racial/ethnic variances in reporting, there is no clear indication whether one racial/ethnic group is victimized at a higher rate.

#### Sexual Violence Perpetration:

- Of the 8,980 perpetrators that were identified by SFY08 sexual violence survivors, 93% were identified as male<sup>23</sup>. 42% were a relative, 40% was an acquaintance, 31% a spouse, 28% a parent/step-parent, 12% an intimate partner, 7% a stranger and .31% other which includes professionals such as law enforcement, therapist, clergy, and medical professionals.
- In Texas, 15% of sexual offense arrests (not including prostitution) were of juvenile males (less than 17 years of age). Of those individuals, the majority was between 13-15 years old<sup>19</sup>.
- Clients receiving services during SFY08 from the Texas Sexual Assault Programs reported the following information about the experiences of their perpetrators. Of the 24,113 perpetrators reported, 35.7% abused alcohol, 27.7% abused drugs, 22% were abused as a child, 20% witnessed abuse as a child and 10% utilized the sex industry<sup>23</sup>.

#### Identified Populations for RPE Strategies/Activities:

The following table identifies the target populations for RPE strategies/activities. The universal population represents the entire state of Texas regardless of risk for perpetration and/or victimization. The selected population includes those individuals with an increased risk of experiencing or perpetrating sexual violence based on the stated risk factors.

Type	Target
Universal	Men, women, and children in Texas
Selected	2-18 year old males who exhibit any of the following risk factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes/beliefs supportive of sexual violence</li> <li>• Impulsive/aggressive behavior</li> <li>• Adhere to strict gender roles</li> <li>• Live in a family environment characterized by physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and/or sexual abuse as a child</li> </ul>
	16-24 year old males who exhibit any of the following risk factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessed or experienced physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, and/or sexual abuse, as a child</li> <li>• Attitudes and beliefs supportive of sexual violence</li> <li>• Hostility towards women</li> <li>• Associate with sexually aggressive peers</li> </ul>

#### Goals and Risk Factors:

The following tables identify Texas specific goals and risk factors associated with both the selected and universal populations. The goals and risk factors are organized within each level of the socio-ecological model and are in order of priority as established by the PPPC. The ecological model represents multiple levels of influence and provides structure for implementing prevention activities at multiples levels (or spheres of influences) so as to holistically impact individual, relationship, community, and society risk factors.

#### Individual Level

Goal	Risk Factor
To reduce attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors supportive of sexual violence	Attitudes and beliefs supportive of sexual violence
To increase social competencies among youth	Witnessing or experiencing sexual, physical, emotional/psychological/verbal abuse as a child
Decrease bullying and/or sexual harassment behavior in youth 5-18	Impulsive and aggressive behaviors

### Relationship Level

Goal	Risk Factor
Increase adult modeling of social competencies, positive values, and positive identify (as defined by the 40 Developmental Assets).	Living in a family environment characterized by physical, emotional/psychological and/or sexual abuse
To increase positive peer influences among males ages 10-24.  Increase interventions to change attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors supportive of sexual violence.	Associating with sexually aggressive and delinquent peers

### Community Level

Goal	Risk Factor
Reduce the tolerance of sexual violence and other forms of violence in the community	General tolerance of sexual violence and other forms of violence

### Societal Level

Goal	Risk Factor
Reduce the norms that support sexual violence such as male superiority, sexual entitlement, and objectification of women	Norms supportive of sexual violence
Reduce disparity based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation	Inequalities based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation (includes objectification of women).
Increase positive, healthy, realistic images and representations of women.  Increase mutability of gender roles without fear of marginalization or violence.	Gender role socialization and objectification of women.

The PPPC has identified the following goals to build capacity at the state and local level to support primary prevention efforts.

1.	Increase support and knowledge of primary prevention among leadership in RPE funded organizations.
2.	Increase the quality and consistency of magnitude data collected in the state of Texas.
3.	Increase collaboration and coordination of organizations throughout Texas for the implementation of primary prevention efforts.
4.	Increase resources available for primary prevention efforts in Texas.
5.	Increase the capacity of RPE funded organizations to engage in primary prevention efforts and move into the implementation phase.

#### Situational Factors:

Studies have indicated that sexual violence risk factors such as alcohol or drug use and poverty impact perpetration and victimization of sexual violence<sup>32,33,34</sup>. For the purpose of this plan, the PPPC has determined these factors to be situational in sexual violence perpetration and victimization. According to the publication *Engaging Communities in Sexual Violence Prevention*<sup>50</sup> a situational factor is something that might be associated with a specific sexual assault and probably includes specific behaviors of the victim or perpetrator and the circumstances surrounding the incident. These factors often act as confounding variables when determining the risk of perpetration.

Rather than expending RPE funds to address these issues directly, the PPPC recommends RPE funded organizations integrate situational factors into sexual violence primary prevention efforts by joining coalitions and other community groups that are already in place to address these issues and by participating in the development of community specific strategies/activities regarding these issues that other community organizations may have the capacity to implement.

#### Recommendations for Implementation:

To effectively transition to a primary prevention approach to end sexual violence a comprehensive prevention program must be implemented. The PPPC recommends the following guidelines when choosing strategies/activities to be implemented.

- Strategies and activities must be informed by community stakeholders and supported by local and state data.
- Strategies/activities chosen must align with the CDC's working definition of sexual violence prevention.
- Strategies/activities must integrate cultural relevance and specificity into prevention programming.

The PPPC further recommends the utilization of the state capacity building team to assist organizations in successfully implementing this plan.

Finally, the needs identified in this plan are many and cannot be met overnight. Ending sexual violence in Texas will be a long and laborious process that will require the support of all Texans as well as communities, organizations, businesses, government entities, and the legislature.